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SRI LANKA-INDIA: Emergency Discussions

Increasing ethnic violence in Sri Lanka's northern province of Jaffna has prompted an emergency visit to New Delhi by a senior Sri Lankan official to explain Colombo's recent aggressive efforts to contain communal problems and to argue for a reduction in India's support for Tamil insurgents. [REDACTED]

Since Wednesday, insurgent attacks in Jaffna have intensified, [REDACTED] The Army claims to have killed as many as 30 insurgents in repulsing the attacks. [REDACTED]

Sri Lanka's newly appointed Minister for National Security flew to New Delhi yesterday for four days of talks on the communal disorders. He will meet with Prime Minister Gandhi, the Defense Minister, the Minister of External Affairs, and other senior advisers. [REDACTED]

Before leaving, the Minister announced the imposition of a naval "surveillance zone" between India and Sri Lanka to interdict the movement of insurgents, arms, and other supplies into Jaffna from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. He stated that suspicious vessels in this narrow zone will be subject to search and seizure by patrol craft, which are to be assisted by aerial surveillance. [REDACTED]

Comment: The visit is mainly designed to ease growing bilateral tensions. The Minister will try to persuade Gandhi that President Jayewardene's tough approach to the communal problem is working. [REDACTED]

Jayewardene is already concerned about Indian training camps for Tamil insurgents in Tamil Nadu. He probably fears that, if India views the situation in Sri Lanka as out of control, Gandhi will intervene in Sri Lanka more directly. [REDACTED]

Colombo's firm response to the recent disturbances indicates that Jayewardene is committed to confining insurgent activity to the northern province. He also is demonstrating to Sinhalese supporters that his government will not bend to Tamil separatist demands. [REDACTED]

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